Issue 128 September 2015

KNOTTING MATTERS

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

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Index:

4 Executive Committee Report
5 Letters to The Editor
10 Quick Butterfly Loop **by Andy Schmitz**
12 The Double Snowdrop Bend **by Rodger D. Callan**
16 The RAM-BOW-LINE **by Owen K. Nuttall**
18 Book Review **by Geoffrey Budworth**
21 LEGO for Knots & Ropework suggests Geoffrey Budworth
24 Center Spread from Visit by L'Hermione, 2015
26 It's Knot Art or Craft **by Patrick C. Glisson**
29 How I Did It **by Rodger D. Callan**
31 Kids Can't Tie Laces **from Our UK Stringer**
33 A Pot-Holder Project **by Satish Patki**
36 Hobart 2015 Wooden Boat Festival **from Penny Bodger**
38 2016 Meeting Plans
40 A Knot Board for Scouts **by Andy Keats**
41 Spanish Hitching Tutorial **by Joe Bennett**
44 Remembering Times Past
45 Supply Snippets
46 Ancient Practice
47 Branch Meetings

Cut-off date for Winter Solstice issue receipt of copy is Tuesday November 10, 2015,
Cut-off date for Spring Equinox Issue receipt of copy is Tuesday February 11, 2016,

***Front Cover** A pumpkin seen on Facebook, artisan and photographer unknown at time of press, posted by Nadjoua of Algeria and apparently for sale on E-bay! - Ed.*

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of IGKT Executive Committee meeting of September 14th, 2015
Out of 14 members we had 9 attendees, one no-show and four apologies.

Future meetings:-
October 2015 half-yearly meeting, Rotterdam
May 2016 AGM, in Hampshire (south of England)
October 2016 Half-yearly meeting, France

The quotations [estimates] for publishing Knotting Matters by another publisher had been considered and the offer rejected on the basis of a considerable amount of work for officers in re-jigging the extensive mailing arrangements, that the lower cost may be only temporary, and no dissatisfaction with the current cost had been raised.

The Secretary will be sending out 955 copies of Knotting Matters, 129 of which include reminders for dues payment, 60 members will receive 'cut-off' letters and 58 members have not responded to their prior 'cut-off' letter and will be removed from the rolls.

Difficulties with logging on to the website are being addressed, suggestions were requested for an IT-savvy individual member to assist with web-site management by updating on a regular basis [call or speak to an EC member]. Some members of the web-site Forum are using inappropriate language. The Forum will be switcheed to a members-only area temporarily, until this matter could be resolved.

Our next meetings will be the 15th of November 2015 and the 24th of January, 2016.
David Pepper
Secretary Executive Committee

Letters to The Editor
The Things You Say!!

Rope Making

While the focus of member's attention is primarily knots and knot-craft, I would not be surprised if several members were also interested in rope making. (I use the term "rope making" to include the manufacture of rope of any diameter.) One of the handicaps of living in a remote place has been the paucity of materials available, and this has led to my developing an interest in aspects of rope making, mainly materials and methods.

Thanks to the generosity of many members I have traded with in recent years, and picking up quite a lot of string, cord, twine and braid during my travels overseas, there has been less need for me to manufacture any of these materials. Nonetheless, the interest remains and I have had some success at fund raising for our local maritime museum making short lengths of rope from gardening sisal using an antique rope maker. I have done a little research on the subject and spent some time viewing clips on U-Tube, as well as discussing the subject with a couple of members.

I am an irregular viewer of the forum on the Guild web site and cannot recall seeing any contributions / questions /exchanges on the subject of rope making. I also do not recall if there has been much in the way of articles on the subject in KM. I think it may be worthwhile canvassing the members in some way to determine if the subject would be of interest to sufficient numbers to include it in the forum and KM.

Frank Brown

Hi Lindsey,

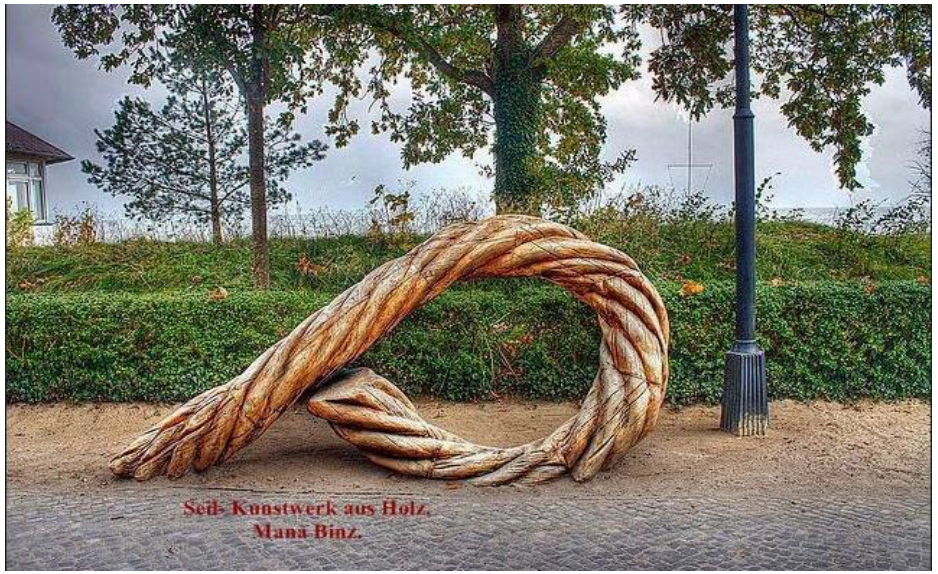
There is in deepest darkest Exmoor [***Harde Down, Brayford, Devon***] a pub called the Poltimore Arms, not Inn, interesting place, no electricity, just a generator, lots of candles, and real ales in barrels [***members of CAMRA***]. Sitting in there one night I saw a couple of people outside looking at the IGKT sticker in my Land Rover windscreen. Sensing a question coming on I went outside where a discussion was going on. They thought it was something to do with the Civil War Society, Torrington is big in this regard, not far away, so I explained what it was all about.

A while later one of them came over and asked me if I had heard of a Dr. Hunter, I told him I had heard the name. He went on to tell me that he had invented a knot in the 80s, famous you know, got in the Times and that he was a relative of his. That's really interesting ' I said and how pleased I was to meet him. I decided against telling him the whole story as I knew it! So he went on his way happy to have shared a bit of his family history he was proud of. Amazing, what were the odds of that.

A while ago I met a guy in Scotland who told me that when he was a lad he had sailed from Poole to Marseilles in a fishing boat; having an interest in sailing and all things maritime this struck me as a bit odd so I got curious and asked him how long the voyage took, 'Oh quite a few hours, most of the day' he replied. Pardon me? Poole to Marseilles?? ' A couple of weeks I would have thought more like it!' came my reply. In short, I know Poole well and Cherbourg too, so the conclusion was that that was probably where he went. Disappointment showed in his face. 'All these years I thought and told people I'd been there' he said. 'I'd wrecked a harmless illusion. All it proved was that I knew where Marseilles was, which he didn't need to know anyway. I never forgot that so we've arrived back at Dr. Hunter's relative.

The big question is what if this had been applied to the good Dr. Hunter? He would have gone through his life telling people 'I've invented a knot you know, it was in the Times!' What harm? Discuss.....!
Best Regards,
Cazbil [***Cazbil is one of our newest contributors - interesting question!***]

From Lee Radehag:



An interesting wood sculpture on the Island of Rugen, Germany.

From Peter Nelson: a carving by Patricia Burke

Hello Lindsey,
In the Magazine, Issue 127 June 2015, I read with interest the Letter to the Editor "Not Knotting in Scouting". As an ex Sea Cadet Civilian Seamanship Instructor I know very little about the knot tying requirements of the Scouting Organization. However, as a Guild Member, and a Friend of the Lancaster Maritime Museum, I was asked by Dr. Rachel Roberts, the Museum Manager, if I could help out with an evening of knot tying activity in the museum. It would appear that the local Cub-Scout Group had booked the museum for an evening's activity and wanted to do some knot tying.
With this in mind Dr. Roberts called me in, as a Guild Member, to help out and, as you will see from the photo, I am knee deep in Cub Scouts in the Museum's Long Room, all busy knotting. I do not know if the Scouts have abandoned knotting, but it is alive and well in Lancaster.

Eric Greenough, West Yorkshire Branch

Hello Lindsey, Further to your question about the purchase shown in the Maritime Museum Lancaster [***Article on p. 31, Issue #122, March, 2014, photograph below of exterior hoisting arm, and 2:1 purchase in corner of previous page photograph***]. In it's hey-day Lancaster was a major port in the 1700s and ships from the port were the 4th largest transporter of slaves. Located on St George's Quay were the warehouses (now apartments) for the storage of cargos. So the attached shot will show the derricks were used to raise loads from the quay to be stored in the warehouses [***of course, using the 2:1 purchase***].

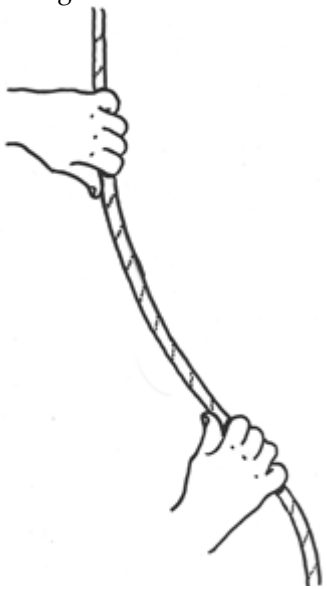
Regards
Eric Greenough

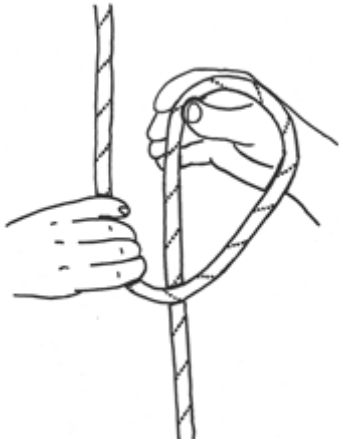
I Much appreciated the research done by Mr. Glisson into the requirements of the Boy Scouts of America, as his letter to the editor June 2015 indicated. My grandfather taught knotting in the scouts at a national level (as the story goes), and was actually sponsored by a rope manufacturer who provided him with literature and products to share with the youth. My father taught my brother and me rope and knot knowledge as young scouts and I in turn enjoy teaching the young men I work with proper knotting technique and application. Thank you for passing on the information on scout knotting history, it was a fun read.
Sincerely, Rob Johnson

Quick Butterfly Loop

by Andy Schmitz

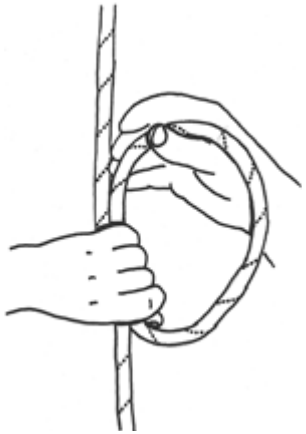
① Begin with palms facing away and thumbs facing each other

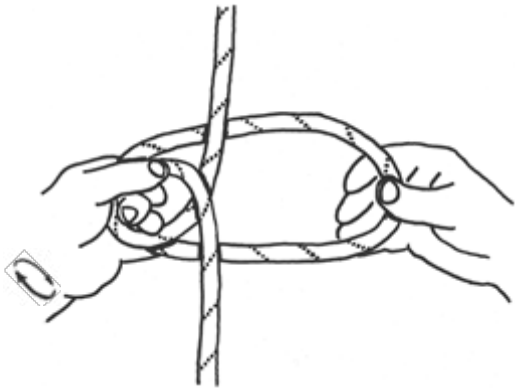




② Form underhand loop with right hand

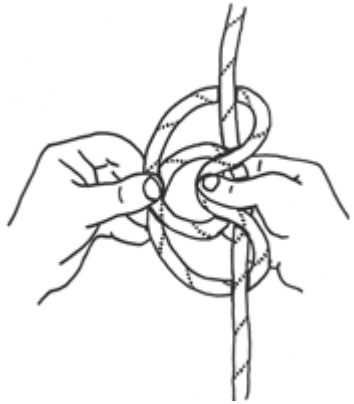
③ Grasp loop with left hand



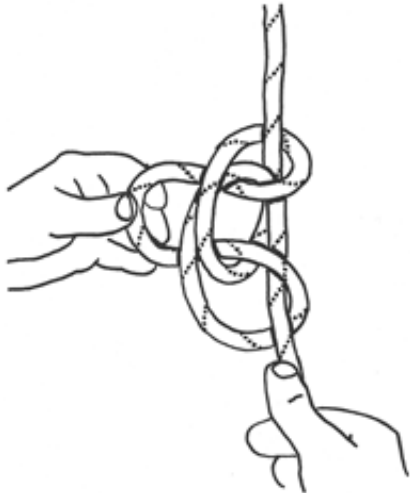


⑦ Twist left hand 180 degrees anti-clockwise (aka counterclockwise)

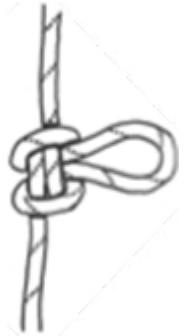
⑧ Pass bight through loops



⑨ Pull tight to dress and set



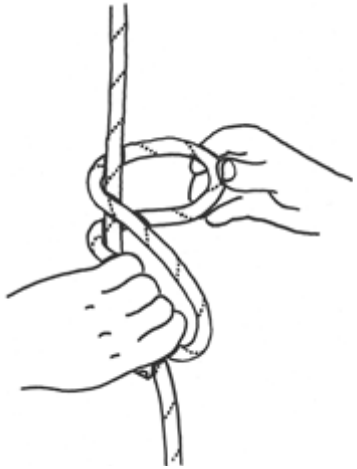
Back



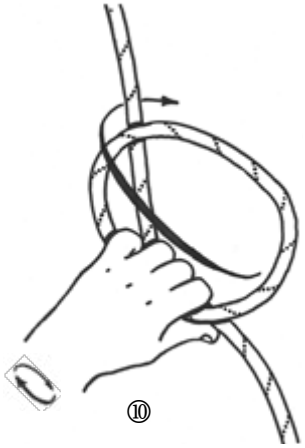
Front

④ Pass loop over standing part

⑤ Grasp loop behind standing part



⑥ Pull loop behind standing part

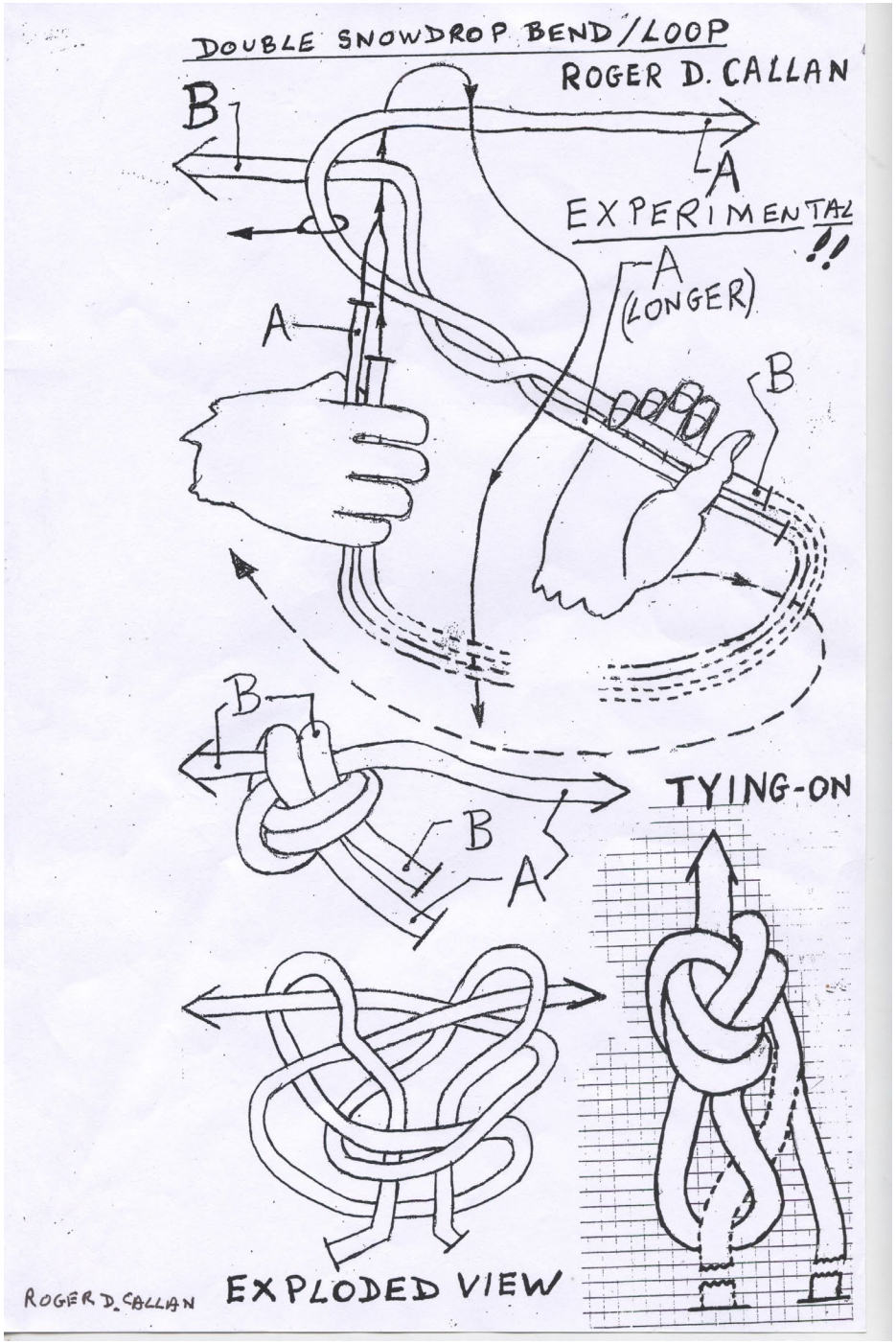


⑩

These illustrations show tying the knot in a vertically hanging rope, but this method can be easily adapted to a horizontal rope or a slack rope. Each step has been shown for clarity, but ② & ③, ④ & ⑤, and ⑥ & ⑦ are easily combined. In fact, with a little practice, you can move from ③ into ⑦ in one smooth motion, by rotating the loop up, around, and behind the standing part, using only your left hand! (see Fig. ⑩)

Here is a link to a YouTube video of this method:

http://tinyurl.com/quickbutterfly



"The Double Snowdrop Bend"

by Rodger D. Callan

Could this be a possible replacement for the "American Death Knot" (ADK) also known as the "Euro Death Knot" (EDK)? I have been searching for such a knot for years, since I became horrified at seeing the ADK/EDK being used in climbing-wall clubs and even being advocated in climbing books. A knot that is continually trying to unravel surely cannot be right.

I did manage to produce several effective solutions using a form of locking mechanism added to an ADK/EDK. However, on reflection, I felt it wrong to disseminate this information, [***because***] lazy or careless application could result in just having the ADK/EDK left, defeating the object of the exercise. One day I was trying to devise a better form of inline loop, tied without ends. I came up with the (single) "Snowdrop loop", but this had a certain untidiness about it which needed some dressing. Correcting this brought about the "Double Snowdrop Loop" and from this came the "Double Snowdrop Bend".

This bend incorporates elements of my "New Knotting Technology", whereby the standing parts slide past each other in parallel without directly engaging with each other. They then pass into large radius curves which traverse round the rest of the knot body. This minimises the stress in the rope and should make the knot stronger. Analysis of the exploded view shows that the knot consists of a "figure of eight knot" 'melded' intimately with an "overhand knot". The result is a knot having what I call a "Low Entropy Surface". It should be strong due to the large radii in the SP bodies, it should be secure and it is very easy to tie.

Tying the Double Snowdrop Bend/Loop [***see page 12***]

Place the SPs in opposition and lead the parallel WEs, of suitable length, towards you at slightly more than 90 degrees, to form a tee figure. Make the right hand WE slightly longer as a tell-tale to check the correct position of the cords in the knot. Fold LH – WE over the (longer) RH- WE keeping the ends parallel. The pair of the parallel ends are grasped in the right hand with palm upwards, which is then folded over towards the junction of the SPs in the original tee layout.

A bite of cord on the RH-SP is drawn over the LH-WE at the tee junction, forming an 'eye space'. The right hand holding the WEs is passed through this 'eye space' The WES are passed into the left-hand and the right hand slides down, with hooked fingers into the double cord loop below. A suitable length of the parallel WEs is drawn through while the double cord loop is held open by the right hand hooked fingers.

The parallel WES are folded back over the SPs and down the front to be tucked through the double cord loop. Note: The LH-SP body emerging on the RH side of the knot should now traverse a helical downward path over the cord below, ending up as the lower coil itself. From here both horizontal coils should map in parallel round the rest of the path through the knot. The result is to produce a large radius curve in the LH-SP body. If the WE body cords swap position, a smaller radius curve in the LH-SP body results, but the knot is still valid. Undo by peeling top riding turns apart.

The same method is used to tie the in-line loop without the ends.
I thought that making a 'tying on' loop of a figure eight might be difficult as it involves the threading of a 'figure of eight' knot through the existing structure, a left-hand 'overhand knot'…..until I tried! It turned out to be remarkably easy, you just have to remember the positions of the relevant structures:-

The left hand end loop before the final tuck under the top riding turns.
The tuck of the top horizontal turn through to the back under the right hand end loop.
The fact that the initial 'overhand' knot provides the RH top riding turn, so that after the loop is passed through the harness the start of the threading gives the LH top riding turn.

In effect you are reverse tracing the path taken by the right hand cord (A) in the bend diagram. As shown in the diagram on the right you can conveniently stow the long WE down through the loop which keeps it hanging down centrally and out of the way of snagging on a hand or equipment.

So here we have three possibly useful knots for the price of one.
Note that these are experimental knots and due caution is needed until they are proven safe.

Lindsey,

Greetings, Here's a piece of cordage trivia. October the 25th is the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt, when a greatly out numbered English Army, the backbone of which were the Archers, beat the French , resoundingly. And that was when all the MR. STRINGERS REALLY MADE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES !!!. (and of course the Messrs. Bowyers, Arrowsmiths and Fletchers). Lets hear it for flax.

Cheers, Be lucky.

Roger Carter.

The RAM-BOW-LINE

by Owen K. Nuttall

Hello Lindsey,

I was surprised not to see the two drawings of my puzzle knot in the latest K.M. [***Sorry to say, Owen, that nobody responded to your puzzle - Ed***]
Another knot that has puzzled me for many years is a Bowline tied in climbing rope; until I came up with the Ram-Bow-Line. In my article below on the Ram-Bow-Line (with three attachments) I hope I have found the answer.

Thanks for your time
Owen

The Ram-Bow-Line

This knot came about through a series of knot manipulations, going back to Ramshank (K.M. 54). I was demonstrating (earlier in the year) the difference between the Sheepshank and the Ramshank. By undoing one half of both knots, the sheepshank would collapse; but the Ramshank it would hold firm.

Later I was playing about with the Ramshank, after undoing one half of the knot with the working end outside of the Ramshank; by pulling a bight through the bottom loop, the knot made a kind of single loop. So I changed the working end to the front of the bottom loop, and pulled the bottom loop up, this made a better single loop. Thinking this was a new knot was short lived as it was practically the same as the perfection loop, slight difference on the face and identical on the rear.

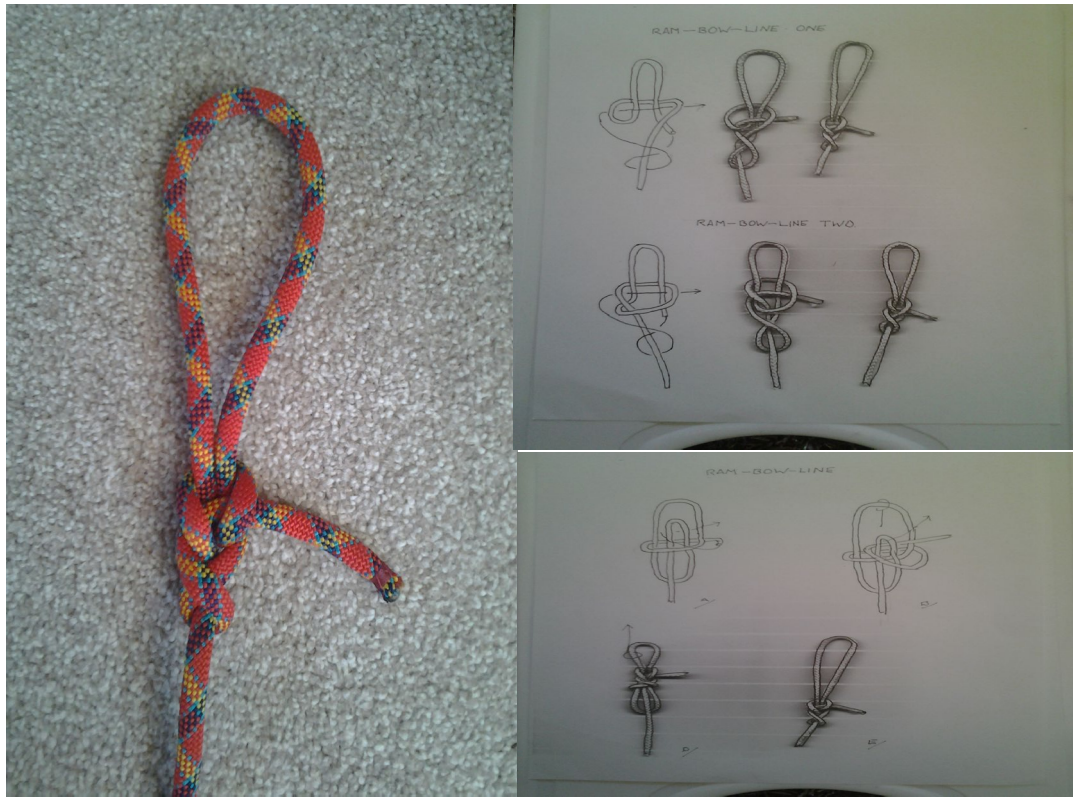
When I improved the Linfit Dolly Knot with a turn around, to make the Turn around Linfit Dolly Knot. Repeating the same procedure as the previous Dolly knot came up with the Ram-Bow-Line (an acknowledgement to the Ramshank).

This was a complicated way of tying, and limited to a fixed loop, so I loosened the knot and retied it as Ram-Bow-Line one. On further twiddling about I came up with Ram-Bow-Line two; based on a simple slip knot start which would be easier to remember to tie.

I prefer Ram-Bow-Line one as it has a better grip on the working end (like the Yorkshire Man Clutching a £50 note). When tied in climbing rope it is fairly easy to untie after loading. Just ease the back loop up the top loop and it becomes easy to untie. Far easier than a loaded figure of eight loop.

I would appreciate any feedback from climbers.

Thanks Ramshank
Owen K Nuttall



Book Review

by Geoffrey Budworth

Laces – 100s of Ways to Pimp Your Kicks, by Ian Fieggen

Copyright © 2007 by Sterling Publishing Co. Inc.
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ISBN-10: 1402752016
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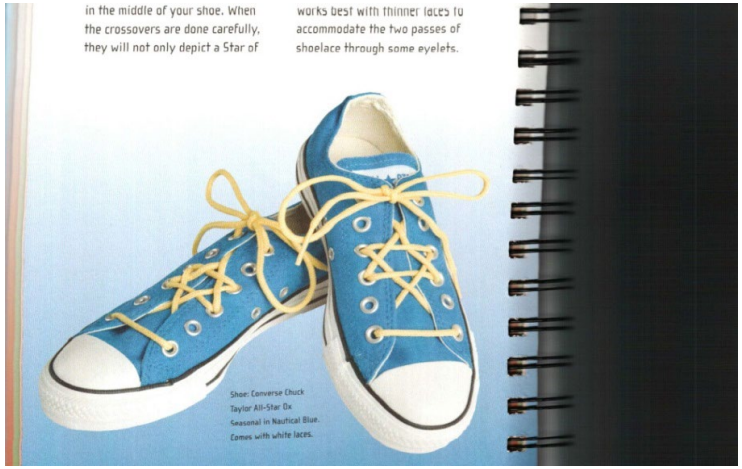
New Zealand-born Ian Fieggen (aka 'Professor Shoelace'), who now lives in Melbourne, Australia, has researched shoelaces for over 30 years. He suggests in this book (his first) that, as they are relatively cheap to replace, readers should customize their footwear with laces that may be natural fibre or synthetic, round or flat, plain, or coloured or plain, hard or soft, stiff or elastic, fat or thin, rough or smooth, long or short. Then [***one should***] combine two in a single shoe or boot to achieve more complex effects.

The fold-over covers of his book are stitched with the kind of black canvas used for basketball boots, the front one incorporating two parallel sets of six eyelets inserted for the user to practise lacing and tying with the flat lace provided. Inside the back cover is a plastic envelope holding two more flat laces and two round laces. The 192 pages are spiral-bound to lie flat when open, so that each verso (left-hand) page featuring a colour photo of a laced shoe or boot can be viewed with the technical drawing of that lacing and instructions how to do it on the corresponding recto (right-hand) page. Given six pairs of eyelets (or lugs), nearly two trillion (2×10^{12}) lacing permutations are theoretically possible, but only a few dozen are practical. This book features 52 of them, portrayed in a range of footwear. Some activities (e.g. running, ball games) require flexibility and adjustable comfort. Others (ice skating, roller blading) need firmer support for insteps and ankles. A few may be protective (motor cycling, horse riding). Ian even gives us a choice of four lacings to facilitate 'hacky sack' (the trademarked foot-bag kept aloft by skilful kicking and kneeing).


in the middle of your shoe. When the crossovers are done carefully, they will not only depict a Star of
works best with thinner laces to accommodate the two passes of shoelace through some eyelets.
Shoe: Converse Chuck Taylor All-Star Dx Seasonal in Nautical Blue. Comes with white laces.

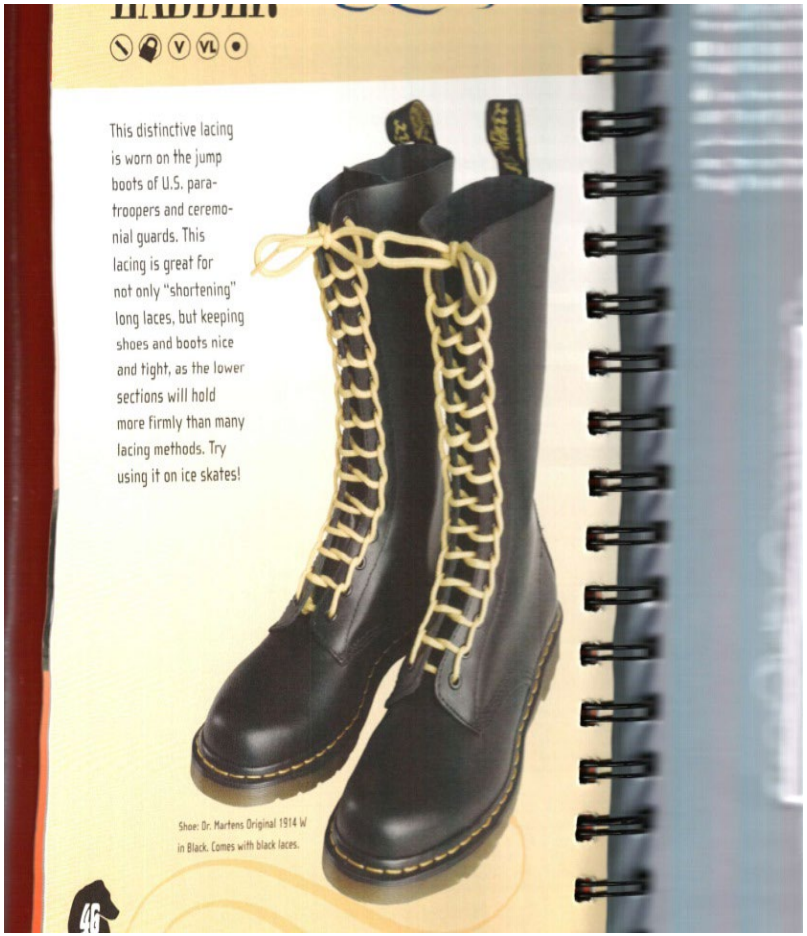
[Hexagram: page 108]

More decorative variations (say for ceremonial parades) are time-consuming, as well as harder to tighten and loosen later. The book also describes 16 knotting methods, including a one-handed tie that could aid arthritic hands. In every instance, a reef – NOT a granny – knot is recommended. And the author's 'Ian Knot' is, he claims, demonstrably 'the world's fastest knot'. It could be, as it is a double reef bow tied by the technique for Tom Fool's knot (A#1141). To complete the main theme, eight ways to make or improvise aglets (those metal or plastic tips on lace ends) are also described.

The book is complemented by a clear and concise list of contents, and a 1,000 word introduction from the author. It ends with four appendices: (1) 86 lacing variations for odd and even numbers of eyelets from three to 12 pairs; (2) algebraic formulae to calculate approximate lengths of lace required for the featured lacing methods, while leaving the required length for knotting; (3) lacing styles listed by attribute – easy, difficult, best with round laces, etc.; (4) knots listed by attribute – easy, difficult, most secure, easiest to untie, etc.. Ian's final 500 or so words headed Resources commend both the Ashley Book of Knots and the International Guild of Knot Tyers to readers wishing to learn more about knots.

I recommend this robust, handsome product which is an instructive manual, a delightful browse, and a fashion parade of leading shoe brands.
G.B.

∞ oOo ∞

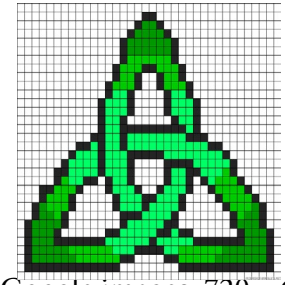

This distinctive lacing is worn on the jump boots of U.S. paratroopers and ceremonial guards. This lacing is great for not only "shortening" long laces, but keeping shoes and boots nice and tight, as the lower sections will hold more firmly than many lacing methods. Try using it on ice skates!
Shoe: Dr. Martens Original 1914 W in Black. Comes with black laces.
46

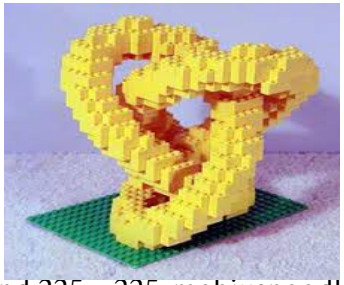
[Ladder: page 46]

Lego(R) for Knots & Ropework

suggests Geoffrey Budworth

At the IGKT Knotting Extravaganza held in London, England on Saturday 21st June 1986, it is said, the young Neal Pawson (UK) had made a working Lego® model of a rope-making machine. I wish I'd seen it. Now fast forward, tap into Google [Images], and you will find numerous rope, braid and twine making mechanisms – with short videos of some in use – made with Lego®, also knots including the two dimensional trefoil (akin to a Cavandoli design) and the 3D sculpture below.



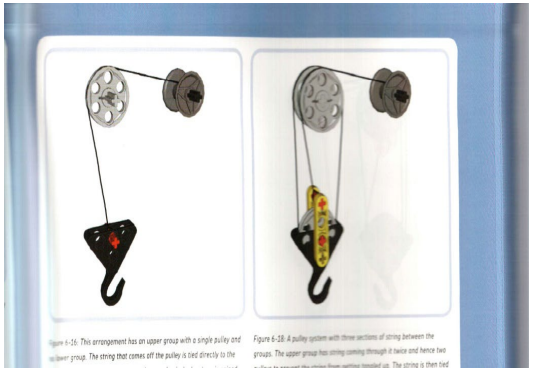


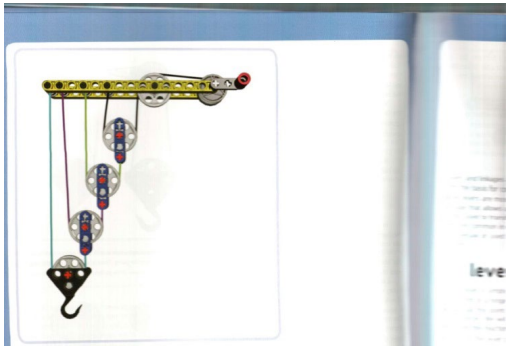
[Google images: 720 x 640-pinterest.com and 225 x 225-mobiusnoodles.com]

There is a book[1] to help you create such models with the classic Danish bricks, as well as to make lettering like the LEGO name below (in two styles, one with bricks and the other with pegs). Similarly we might emblazon our own I.G.K.T. initials.

[Left-hand illustration scanned from the 2013 book by Allan Bedford; Right-hand Google Image: 2000 x 1126 – twochickandatonofbric.ks.com]

From the proliferation of other Lego® books and booklets (more than 50 different ones in my local large bookstore), I recommend three lavishly illustrated and colourful manuals[2,3,4] on how to add mechanical motion and construct working models. These feature the Lego® Technic range which evolved from building bricks to use structural beams in the assembly of frameworks for shafts, gears, pulleys, levers and linkages (pistons, chains and drive-bands).

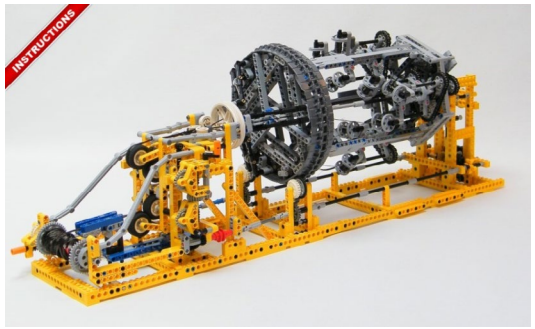


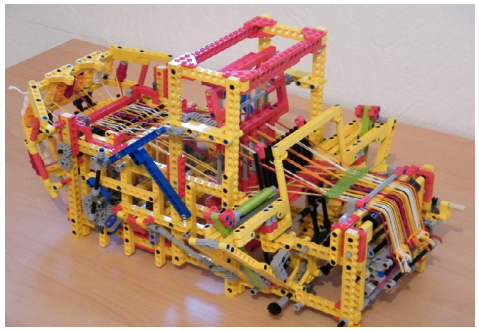


[Simple and compound pulleys scanned from
Pawet "Sariel" Kmieć's 2013 book: mechanical advantages = 3 and 16]

So adaptable is Lego® Technic that muscular, load-bearing mechanisms can be constructed, and then powered by hand, pneumatics, electric motors or solar panels.

[left below - Google image of a rope-making machine: 1280 x 784 – nico71.fr]





[right - Google image of a weaving loom: 800 x 600 – nico71.fr]

Lego® Technic is a versatile mini-engineering kit. Use it as an alternative to cork boards or polystyrene tiles and pins for laying out flat mats and Turks' heads. Make a loom for sword-matting. Give a fresh twist to rope, twine and braid making. With it the ingenious and nimble-fingered KM reader can produce compact and portable display models to enliven Guild gatherings, demonstrations and workshops.

[1] The Unofficial Lego Builder's Guide (2nd edition), copyright © 2013 by Allan Bedford, published by No Starch Press, CA (USA), ISBN 978-1-59327-441-2

[2] The Lego Book of Fantastic Contraptions, copyright 2010 by Yoshihito Isogawa, published by No Starch Press, CA (USA), ISBN 978-15932-727-9-1

[3] The Lego Technic Idea Book, copyright © 2011 by Yoshihito Isogawa, published by No Starch Press, CA (USA), ISBN 978-1-59327-277-7

[4] The Unofficial Lego Technic Builder's Guide, copyright © 2013 by Pawet "Sariel" Kmieć, published by No Starch Press, CA (USA), ISBN 978-1-59327-434-4

∞ oOo ∞

Follow-up from Article on p. 34 of #126: the handsome ditty bag and entire contents, donated as a "handshake across the Ocean" to memorialize the original L'Hermione assisting the fledgling United States of America in the form of General George Washington, was proudly displayed aboard the new L'Hermione at the stern [***center spread***]. The Pacific Americas Branch took part of their own member's work, with donated materials from various members around the USA, and presented those goodies to the IGKT members aboard L'Hermione as a small token of our affection and thanks. Mr. Bob Dollar gratefully took possesion of the bag and contents and will share it equitably among the accredited USA Branches. Thanks to Bob, Jose Hernandez-Juviel (now a rigger aboard the USS Constitution) and family members Kim Moore and Rebecca (Becky) Schaffner for making this a memorable occasion!

The crews from L'Hermione and USA exchanging the "handshake across the Ocean"

Jesse Scott Eaves of Louisiana made this decorative piece of art (above)

This (right) is why rope and knotwork is so essential to exploration of the world and larger cargoes - how else could it be done?

Turk's Head Ring by Jose Hernandez-Juviel (far right, upper) and a hitched and grafted covered bottle by Loic Aubron (far right, lower).

Matthew Walker Spliced Eye, adjacent to the belfry (below)

It's Knot Art or Craft

by Patrick C. Glisson

I recently had an opportunity to exhibit some of my knotting work at the "Open Walls" art show at the University where I work. Included in the show were four of my knotted bottles. These knotted bottles were exhibited next to drawings, paintings and sculptures that few would question were "art" but also alongside a handmade quilt, a motorcycle made from salvaged parts and hand crafted Christmas ornaments that some would call a "craft". This raised the question of what is art and what is craft? Among the artisans present at the show, no single definition could be agreed upon. This raises the further question, are knots an art form or a craft?

Doing research on the subject I quickly discovered that the question of what is an art, versus what is a craft, has no clear answer. A couple of broad categorical answers could be distilled from various articles found in the art community. To use very broad strokes the following rough definitions emerged:

A craft serves a purpose, i.e. a basket used to carry items. Here, a craft is a preplanned project where the end result is known ahead of time. A set of specific learned skills is used and there are certain rules or guidelines that must be followed. A knot must be tied a certain way to be a certain knot. A craft can also be mass produced or be one of a series of many meant to be the same.

An art is for decoration, may serve a specific purpose or may be functionally useless, i.e. a fancy basket that sits on a shelf looking pretty but does not work for carrying items. When an art project is started, it may be unplanned and free form. No specific set of rules or guidelines must be followed; the material being used may guide the artist to the final result. A learned skill may be used or it may be simple intuition. An article that is meant to be art should be a one of a kind item, not one of many meant to be the same.

Various art professors and art teachers I have spoken with over the years have offered varied opinions and views on the subject, but have, for the most part, felt that knots and knot tying were a craft and did not rise to the level of art. This attitude seems to be indicative of the Art Community as a whole. In the modern vernacular the term "Art" has become known as the realm of "high society" or the "social elite" while the term "Craft" has been relegated to the "common people" and looked down on by many in the "High Art" community. I personally think this modern delineation is wrong and counterproductive. The ability to do a job is often called 'knowing the trade or craft' and those who are skilled in the trade are called craftsmen. The craftsmen who are excellent in any given trade are often referred to as an artist within their respective tradecraft.

So what is knotting? Is it the art of knotting or is it a craft? At the risk of sounding like I am trying to have it both ways, I would like to propose that knots and knotting are first a craft and secondly an art. The simple act of tying a knot is not necessarily an art or an artistic endeavor. When knots are used simply as a functional tool to accomplish a task, they are simply a skill or tool employed by a craftsman. Knots are often used in Scouts for such purpose as securing a tent or to lash together a bridge. When knots are taught to scouts they are taught as a skill set, to be mastered for a specific purpose, and to be used in a certain manner.

When knots are used to create something for more than just a utilitarian purpose, i.e. a knotted bottle, it qualifies as art. When a knot tyer teaches a class on how to make a knotted bottle or a bell-pull, they are teaching a skill but for the purpose of more than creating a functional item.

For the purpose of defining knots as either art or craft I propose the following;

The act of knot tying in the performance of a trade, the use of the timber hitch to move material on a construction site, or the act of building a structure, such as lashing together a pioneering project is a skilled craft in purpose and practice. Here knots and knotting are skills being used to serve a specific purpose; the end results are planned and are hopefully useful.

The act of putting together different knots for the purpose of decoration or ornamentation, strictly for decorative purpose, i.e. a knotted bottle, is in purpose art. Here the knot tyer, craftsman or artist (you choose which applies) is employing skills that may be used by a craftsman but with the intended purpose of making an object that is intended to be appreciated for its appearance as much as, if not more so than, its function. The end result may not be completely planned and may not be useful. The end result may be "art for art's sake".

Knotting becomes both a craft, serves a purpose, and an art, adds artistic value, when done in such a manner as to make a functional item [***into***] a thing of beauty; for example, when made as a decoratively tied bell-pull. A simple rope with a knot in the end would have served the purpose but an artistically tied bell-pull adds beauty as well as serves a useful purpose.

As the old saying goes "I may not know art, but I know what I like!" To this I would add "if it's appealing to one's senses, regardless of what the 'Art Community' may say, it's art." The saying "It's more art than science" comes to mind; it should be reworded to say "It's more art than craft."
Patrick C. Glisson

Art or Craft? Does it depend on the eye of the beholder? L'Hermione's headrig.

How I Did It - The Racoon Hitch

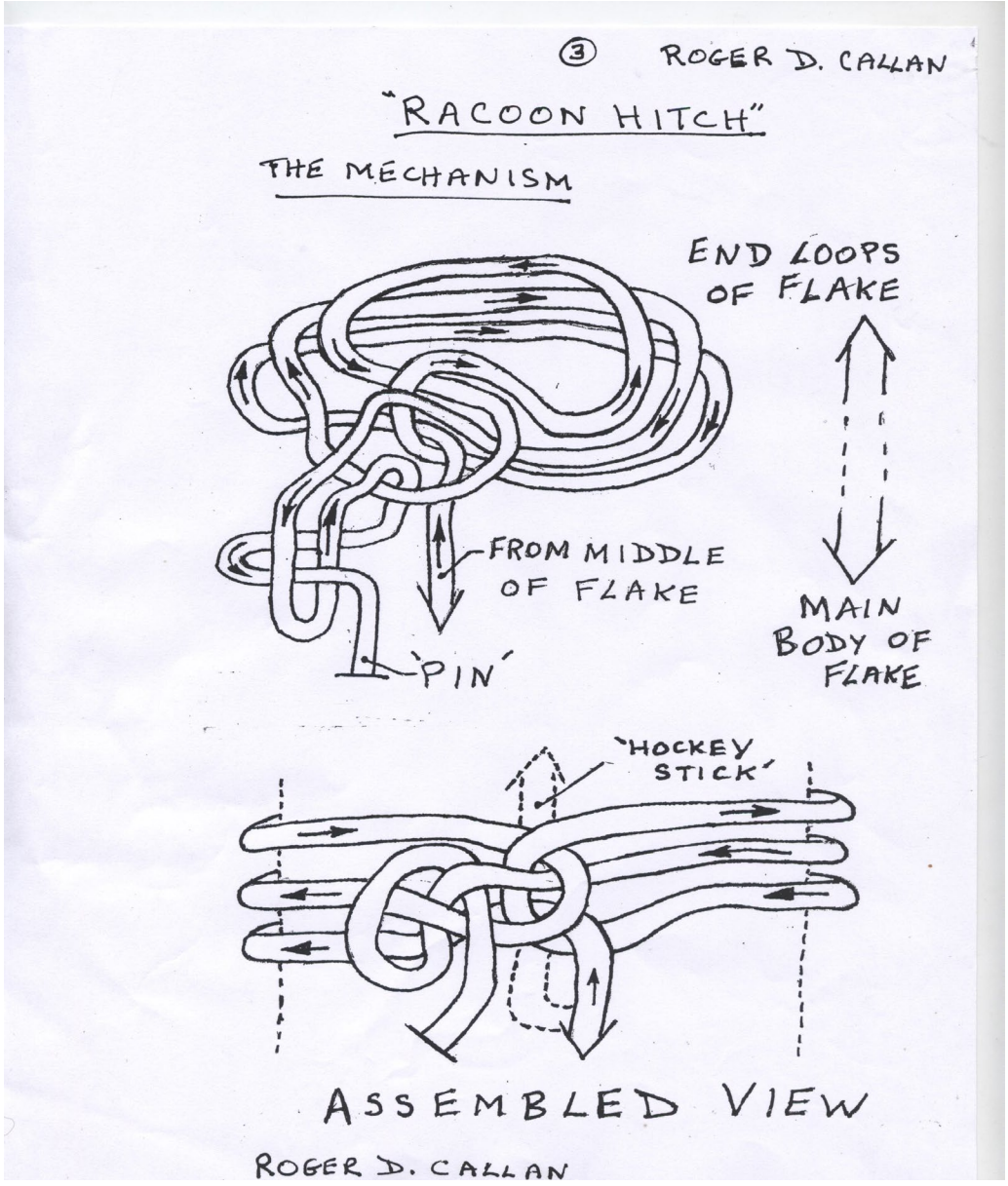
by
Rodger D. Callan

The "Racoon Hitch" is a useful binding used to secure a flaked length of rope or any other bundle. It is easily ratcheted up tight then locked and pinned with the WE. It is also easy to spill when required leaving no knots to remove.

The "Racoon Hitch" came out of my efforts to secure the loose end on a reel of rope /cord. I started off by reversing the direction of the last turn, then going back round and hitching under then over the previous loop. Back round again then half hitching (slipped) through the second loop formed. There were some problems with this when tightening up, identifying to which cord I applied tension was difficult. Although it worked it was rather messy. Then I noticed that where the two loops hooked round each other there was a nice cinch point. Now, passing the returning WE up through this cinch point, an entirely different mechanism is created. Applying some outward tension to the WE cord and yanking from side to side in the direction of the coils the tension is easily ratcheted up and held by the cinch point. This final tuck through the cinch point can be a slip loop which is secured by 'pinning' using the WE passed up through the slip loop before the slack cord is drawn through.

The same mechanism is used at the other end of the flake, in the same relationship with the end loops of the flake.
If a single "Racoon Hitch" is preferred for simplicity or is tied as a stand-alone binding, the part that initially enters the knot is first run across the knot site in a hockey stick shape, so that it is trapped under the body coils of the knot.
There is a clear advantage in inserting the 'pin' from the inside position of the slip loop, rather than from the more inviting proposition of inserting the 'pin' through the slip loop from the outside inwards.

To release, the 'pin' is withdrawn, the loop is slipped and all is loose and can be slid off the flake. Note that the input cord, as it turns left upon entry to the knot, forms an anvil step that serves to kick the WE body neatly upwards into the throat of the cinch point, further enhancing the grip of the cord.



Kids Can't Tie Laces

by Our UK Stringer

On Friday 4th September 2015 the BBC's Radio 4 'Today' programme included an interview with Ian Fieggen on the need for parents to teach their young children how to tie shoelaces. Those who shirk this duty are, he asserted, 'hindering their development'. Many of those same kids who can cope with IT keyboard and screen stuff cannot, these days, tie a double reef bow.

Ian's concern is shared by Gary Kibble, a manager for the UK retailer Littlewoods.com. Online research by that company in 2013 discovered that few children learn to tie shoelaces before the age of six. Thirty years ago, they would have done so by four years of age. Now they avoid the technique by using Velcro®, buckles and fasteners, slip-ons, Crocs™, and flip-flops (or thongs). Indeed, many nursery schools require their charges to have footwear with Velcro®. And market research reports that slip-ons and Velcro® fastenings dominate the six-and-under shoe sales figures; and of the top 100 pairs of girls' and boys' shoes sized between 10 and 3, just one is a formal lace-up shoe.

New Zealand-born Ian Fieggen (aka Professor Shoelace), who lives in Melbourne, Australia, says letting a child avoid something difficult is undesirable. But in this instance does it matter? My daughter, a teaching assistant in a primary school, confirms that staff does not worry if children are unable to tie shoelaces until the age of five or six. Velcro® is acceptable and teachers help those with laces who cannot tie them. After that, however, they expect adults at home to have taught the children (when girls, it appears, can do it a year before boys). And anyway, she tells me, there is peer pressure from older kids saying 'Oh, can't you do that yet?' And, if that doesn't make them learn, then by the age of eight or nine when sports shoes or boots are mandatory – or they covet the latest 'must-have' trainers – tying laces is no longer avoidable.

Some parents and guardians struggle to convey this knotting skill, which they themselves have been doing for years on autopilot. Do they face the learner? Turn their back to him or her? How should the process be broken down into stages … and what if one is right-handed and the other left-handed? Maybe enterprising KM readers who represent the IGKT out-and-about could initiate an alternative to the ever-popular Six Knot Challenge with a 'how-to-tie (or teach tying) shoelaces' workshop.

[***In this issue of KM you will find a review of Ian Fieggen's singular 2007 book Laces – 100 Ways to Pimp Your Kicks, reviewed by Geoffrey Budworth, on page 18. For those readers who enjoy trawling online via search engines, he also has a website devoted to tying shoelaces.***]

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Attachment 1, left, shows the pot in the potholder. Attachment 2, right, shows the single length of decorated rope used, but without the pot.

A POT-HOLDER PROJECT

by

Satish Patki

Dear Sir,

The Janmashtami festival, being the birthday of Lord Krishna, is celebrated with much fervour in India. As a part of the celebrations, decorated earthen pots containing curds, butter, Jowar puffs, and flattened rice are strung high. Teams of young men form human pyramids to reach the height of the pot and break it for the contents. The winning team also gets prize money.

The potholder is made in the traditional way. I intend to let the fellow members of the IGKT know how it is made.

The attachment No. 1 shows the picture of the potholder with one pot in it. The potholder is created with handmade rope having two strands only. The rope is made of a jute thread drawn from used gunny bags. Multicoloured shiny paper is twisted around both the strands to cover the jute and give it a festive look.

The attachment No. 2 shows how the body of the potholder is formed with a single length of rope. A single turn is used (ABOK 41). It starts from top with the leftmost end, goes down to form the first loop, comes up as the second line, takes a turn and goes down to form the second loop. After forming the second loop it come up as the fourth line. On reaching the level of the third line it goes around the first end, passes below the turning point of the second and third line, and passes behind the fourth line as the second end.

The attachment No. 3 shows the bottom of the potholder. It is flat and a cradle is created. The two loop curves are placed flat opposite each other to give four lines. A separate length of strand is taken to bind the touching points of the two loops with a round turn.

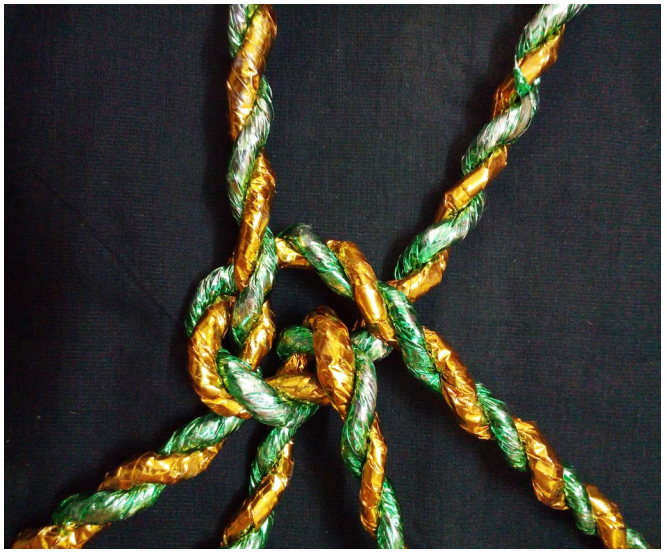
Now we have two strands to twist around to form the second rope. The twisting continues outward. It takes the line in the southwest direction in a twist and continues in anti-clockwise direction. Likewise the North-east, Northwest and Southwest lines are also taken in a twist. After completing one circle, the twisting continues in anti-clockwise direction forming the second circle in a spiral. Once the two circles are formed, the two ends of the twisting rope are tucked in suitably.

The attachment No. 4 & 5 shows the neck of the potholder tied up with shiny paper for binding purpose. Both the ends are finished off with an overhand knot.

The attachment No. 1 shows the potholder supporting a colourful earthen pot.

Regards, Satish Patki
India
Member IGKT

Attachment 3, the base line



Attachment 4, above, and Attachment 5, below, show the finishing of the jute twine and the neck.

Hobart 2015 Wooden Boat Festival

from Penny Bodger

The Biennial Wooden Boat Festival in the historic wharf area of Hobart, Tasmania, was a wonderful excuse for a few IGKT members to get together in February this year. Frank Brown's popular rope making set-up on board the local Maritime Museum's S V May Queen, Australia's oldest sail trading vessel, acted as a meeting place for us and there was plenty to see and do over the 4 days of the Festival. Highlights for us knot tyers were a couple of entertaining and informative presentations by Brion Toss on rigging design and tuning for wooden boats. We particularly enjoyed his innovative use of members of the audience holding hands to simulate lengths of rope and weaving around each other to construct knots and splices! Frank Brown made himself popular by presenting Brion with one of his signature knotted figures – this one a classic illustration from Brion's book, "The Riggers Apprentice". As you can see from the photos – great fun was had by all. How many Guild members can we muster in Hobart in 2017 for the next Wooden Boat Festival?
Penny Bodger

Frank Brown, making rope.

Brion Toss on stage, with helpers to demonstrate rigging

Frank Brown presents Brion Toss with "A Turn Around the Cook's Leg"

IGKT members Frank Brown, Penny & David Bodger, Dave Glasson and Madeleine Rowles enjoy a convivial evening out

Brion Toss engaging the public's interest

2016 Meeting Plans

THE IGKT 2016 AGM
KNOTTING 4 ALL
2K16
Will be held in Fareham, Hampshire, UK.
From Tuesday 3 May to Sunday 8 May 2016.

Part One:- At the historic Fareham Sailing Club on Fareham creek at the head of Portsmouth Harbour from 3-5 May.

Pop Up Workshops. A mixture of informal and structured educational workshops, plus a social gathering of Knot Tyers including possible day visits.

Part Two:- at Ferneham Hall in the centre of Fareham on the 6-8 May.

Friday am	Event set up in the Solent Suite
Friday pm	Further Pop Up Workshops
Evening gathering at a 'venue' TBD.	
Saturday am	Registration & AGM in Meon Suite
Saturday pm	Exhibition open to public.
Saturday	Evening Knot Supper in Octagon Lounge

THE IGKT 2016 AGM
CALL FOR TALKS, DEMONSTRATIONS & DISPLAYS
Speakers, Teachers and demonstrators, are requested to contact Chris Jenkins Solent Branch IGKT Hon. Sec. with details. (E: igktchris@btinternet.com)
Details to follow with Winter Knotting Matters.

Fareham started as the Saxon village of Ferne Ham and is mentioned in the Doomsday book of 1086 as having two water mills. In 1630 it was a busy little port described as being as 'convenient and safe a harbour as Chatham'. In the late 18th century Henry Cort, at a local foundry, developed a revolutionary new process for iron making and he is commemorated today with a sculpture park. In the 19th century the main industries were tanning and brick making with the bricks being used in the construction of the Albert Hall.

In the 18th & 19th centuries, prison hulks were moored in Fareham Lake that at one time housed 9000 prisoners. Primitive hospital facilities were established on the Lower Quay site and the building, which is now the club house of Fareham sailing club, was part of that. By the early 20th century, the creek had silted up and traditional industries had declined. Today Fareham is a thriving market town with good road, rail and air connections close to many places of interest such as Portsmouth Dockyard, Winchester, Stonehenge and Highclere Castle.

Fareham Sailing Club (photographer credit unknown).

A Knot Board for Scouts

by

Andy Keats, Scout Leader, 1st Harleston, Norfolk

A knot board on the wall of our meeting place will not only be decorative but also remind scouts about knots every time they see it.

How to make it is governed by what you want it to do. I want the board to be instructive that can be used by anyone, is easy to handle and follow. This means that a very large board is not easy to handle for our youngest scouts aged 6. Just having the completed knot is not instructive for anyone. The answer is to have a series of panels that can be hung side by side. They are 14 cm wide, 60 cm long, easily handled by a 6 year old. They show the knot in stages, in bright coloured cord to attract the young people. Each board has a label, with the name, a small picture and an indication of some of its uses. The panel is 6 mm MDF covered with cloth, stapled on the back. I will cover the back with some stiff card

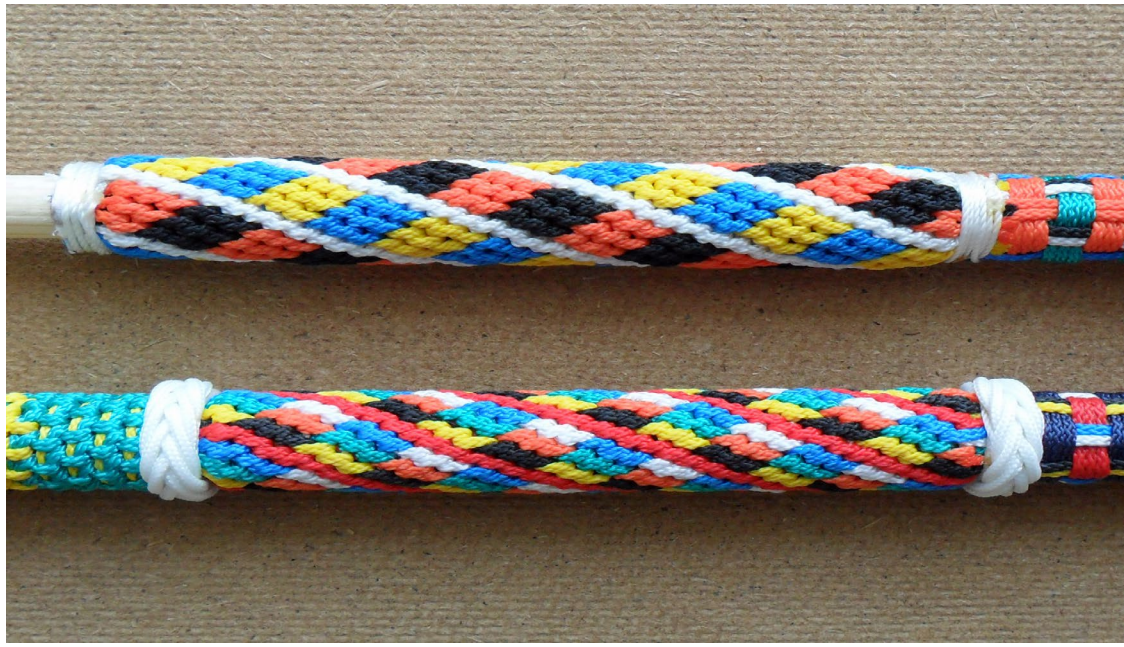
Still a work in progress but I'm sure you can see the idea. The far left hand board shows the use of small pieces of dowel (carefully nailed on) on the round turn and two half hitch board.

The really good point about this project is that new boards can be added at any time and the order they hang in is easily changed.

Spanish Hitching Tutorial

by

Joe Bennett for Madeleine



Lindsey,

This method was shared with Madeleine Rowles of Tasmania, who had asked me about this application. Please find attached a photo of two samples I made for knotboards (***above***). The lower one of the two is a good example of the idea of working with "pairs". Here, orange is paired with green, black with yellow and blue with white. Red is ordinary Spanish Hitching.

I hope you find this helpful.

Madeleine,

I think the best way is to show the progress of just one "pair" of cords (red and blue), in order to avoid confusion.

Photo ①.

The tan cords are unpaired. This is inside hitching. (ABOK #3555). It is useful to keep in mind that, in forming a hitch, you pass over 2 parts of warp then back up under 1 part. In starting off, blue is the working strand and red the underlying “lazy” strand. Notice how I have inserted red to the left of blue. I did this after I completed the first 2 “rows” of normal hitching and let the warp go slack in order to get red in under all, including the warp. Always keep the lazy strand trapped to the left of the working strand. A point I forgot to mention is try to avoid adjacent (horizontally)” changeover points. “. At these points there is no hitch and so there is a very slight depression there which will only be noticeable to you or me. After the finished work is “rolled” these depressions will virtually disappear, especially if you use a cord that is not too stiff.

Photo ②

What I want is 3 blue hitches, 3 red, 3 blue .....
So, at this point bring red up over the top of the warp.

Photo ③

Let blue fall down to the left as shown but don’t hitch with blue.

Photo ④

Carry on hitching with the tan strands as shown.

Photo ⑤.

Here I have come round to the “pair”. [***One complete turn, left-wise***]

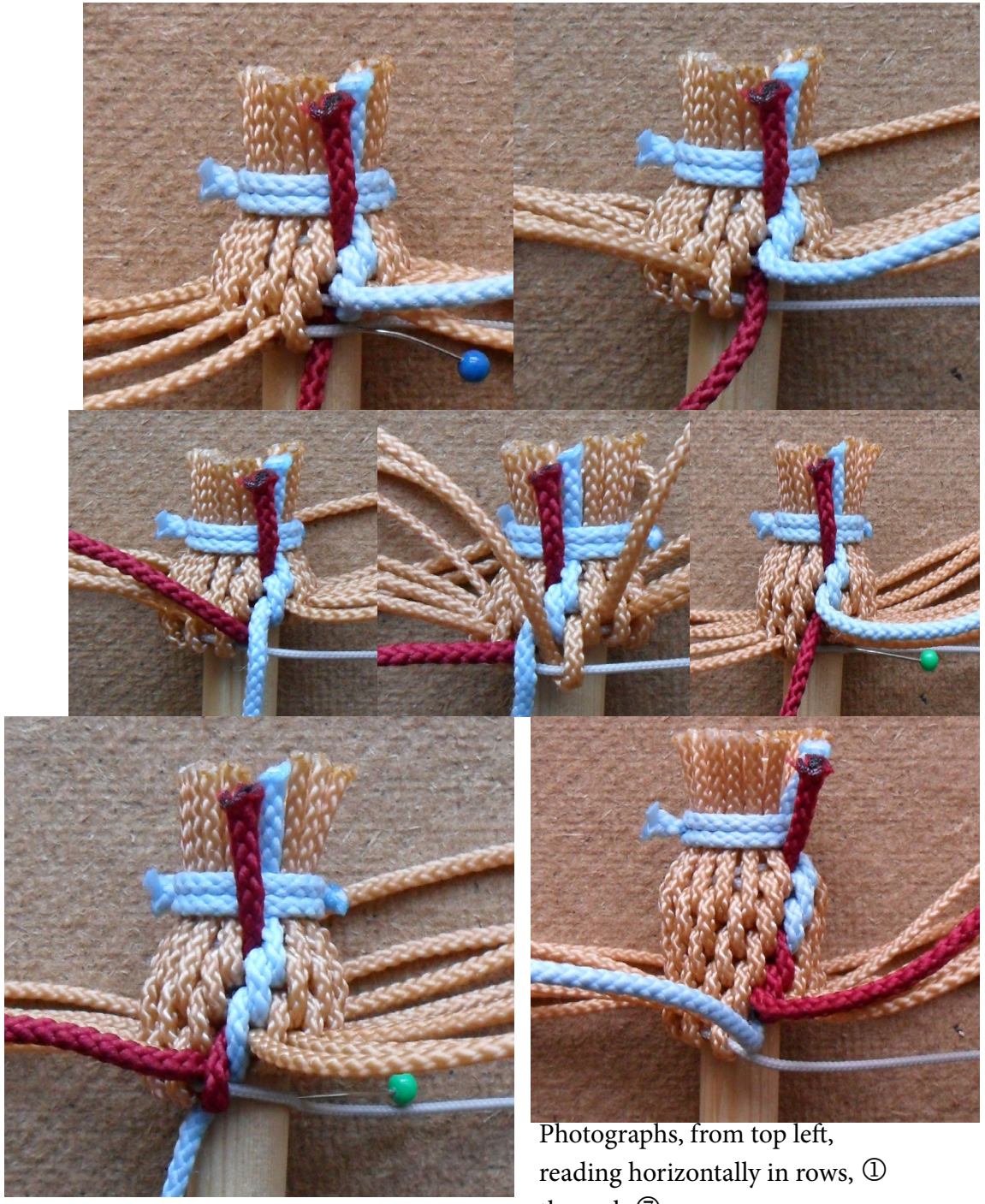
Photo ⑥.

Pass blue down over 2 parts of warp and under the working part of the warp. Hitch with red, trapping blue to the left as shown.

Photo ⑦.

This just shows, after a few more rows have been completed, the point at which we change from red to blue.

I hope you find this small tutorial useful. Let me know how you get on.



Photographs, from top left, reading horizontally in rows, ① through ⑦.

Remembering Times Past
7th May 2015 Victory's 250th Birthday

Photograph by Mkooiman, taken August 26, 2015 and shown under creative commons license from Wikipedia.

HMS Victory, of which Admiral Lord Nelson sailed, was launched on May 7th, 1765. Built in Chatham Dockyard, she is now above water in Portsmouth #1 drydock, where she is undergoing restoration, including re-coloring her to the colors used at the time Nelson sailed aboard her. Those colors have been determined by microscopy by the team of Crick-Smith Conservation at the University of Lincoln. Constructed 90% of oak, with elm, fir, pine and some lignum vitae, she was originally built to carry 100 guns, later modified to carry a greater number at differing times. She had a reported 26 miles (approximately 137,380 feet) of rigging and a displacement (burthened mass) of 3500 tons (approximately 3,550,600 kilos). You should visit!

Supply Snippets

Eric Franklins 'Nylon Novelties' has been reprinted as ' Knotted Novelties'. This handy little booklet contains step by step guides for making flat knot objects. A5 - 28 Pages - £3.
Monograph #3 'Sailmaker's Needles' has been revised and reprinted at £5.50. Des Pawson 2004/5/8/9/10/15 (A5 - 47 pages- 11 b/w -6 coloured illustrations). Covers the history of the sail needle, their sizes and types together with a very comprehensive list of makers names, there are 6 coloured pages showing some of the packaging used to sell sail needles

The Silent 'K'

On Saturday, 17th May, actor Stephen Fry hosted the popular British television show QIXL, on the BBC. This show challenges a panel of four celebrities to prove their knowledge on a number of obscure facts around a chosen theme. On this night, the theme was the silent 'K'.

The first subject presented were four knot diagrams; two hitches, one bend and a loop. The panel were challenged to say how many were knots, the answer being the only loop, although it was pointed out that in general use they could all be termed knots.

Stephen Fry then went on to talk about each in turn and in the process mention that one, the Snuggle Hitch (KM18,p17) was invented or first published by Owen K. Nuttall of the International Knot Tyers Guild. OK, he got the name in the wrong order, but mentions on major television channels are all good publicity for the Guild.

The theme of knots was rounded off by challenging the panel to complete the rope trick "Insecure Shackles", ABOK #2613.

Ancient Practice Continues Into The Present

Photograph of the Past

The method of building floating wooden vessels, for fishing, cargo, transport, recreation or "simply messing about", has differed in three major aspects - floating or dugout craft, followed by shell-first and then frame-first construction. Frame-first techniques include interior frames or ribs, which have planking or other covering attached to the exterior, either as carvel (shown above, where adjacent planks abut edge to edge with adhesive or with caulking) or as clinker-built (where adjacent planks overlap and are fixed together with fasteners). This method has been used since at least 500 CE (Current Epoch), as evidenced by frame-first shipwrecks found in Israel. Shell-first techniques, where skins and, later, planks, were sewn together with frames or ribs inserted later into the final form for strength, developed in early ships such as the Celtic curragh (coracle) and the Inuit kayak. The first techniques utilized naturally-floating objects, such as reeds and logs, and include the familiar dugout canoes, reed rafts and lashed logs, all of which techniques required ropework and knots to survive the excesses of force found in coastal waters, lakes and rivers. Today we enjoy cold-molding and resin-set fibers, returning to a stress-bearing skin technique.

Alaskan Branch
Every Thu. evening 6:00 to 8:00
Anchorage Senior Center
1300 E 19th Ave., Anchorage, AK
Contact Charles Rigden
Tel: (1) 928/231-4775

East Anglian Branch
Contact: Stuart Weston
152 Kittiwake Court, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5GS
01449 674327
07801 239731
pugwash1941@gmail.com

French Branch
Contact Jean-Pierre Durand
06 64 00 66 91
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German Branch
Contact: Matthias Boeving
Tel.: +49 208 3075171
info@knotengilde.de
Deutsche Sektion e.V. c/o Schiffahrtsmuseum, Schiffbruecke 39, 24939
Flensburg, Germany

Midlands Branch
The Old Swan, Netherton
Contact: Bruce Turley
Tel: 0121 453 4124

Northwest Branch
Meeting the second Thursday of each month, in the Red Lion at Winsford from 1200 to 1600 hrs, and the 3rd Wed. at Ellesmere Port Boat Museum from 1100 to 1400 hrs; contact either Paul or Ian at rope.what.knot@gmail.com Evening or weekend meetings could be set up for those unable to be here at lunch-time.

Netherlands
Every last Saturday (except Dec.)
De Hoop, Rotterdam
Contact: Frits Ottens
Tel: +31(0)587850011
Fruitstraat 58, 8933 GR Leeuwarden, Netherlands
E-mail: frits.efina@telfort.nl

NAB - Mid-Atlantic Region
Contact: Michael Pollock

NAB - Knot in the Middle
Contact: Rusty Helms

Pacific Americas Branch
Second Tuesday of each month
At the Los Angeles Maritime Institute (upstairs)
San Pedro, California
Contact: Jimmy Williams
Tel: (1) 310/679-6864
e-mail: igktpab@gmail.com

Solent Branch
Second Tues. of even-number months
Fareham Sailing and Motor Boat Club
Fareham, Hants, UK
Contact: Ken Yalden
Tel: +44(0) 23 9225 9280

Surrey Branch
Meetings are held at Guildford District Scout Centre, Nightingale Road, Guildford, starting at 20:00 hrs. Please phone for more details
Contact: Tony Shellard
Tel: +44(0) 1483 502 156
www.surreyknots.org.uk

Sweden
Contact: Christoffer Åström
Tel: +46 736 381 731
E-mail: christoffer@knopar.se

West Country Knotters
Last Sat. of odd months @13:00 hrs
The Benjamin Perry Boathouse Activity and Training Centre
Phoenix Wharf, Lower Guinea Street, Bristol BS1 6TJ
Contact: Richard Hopkins for directions
Tel: 0117 986 7146
May be subject to change - call first

West Yorkshire Branch
Contact: David Pearson
Tel: 0113 257 2689

Back Cover - Jorgen Friis-Christensen has added these very attractive ditty bags to his already-extensive repertoire. I cannot imagine using them for carrying tools of the rigging trade, however! - Ed